



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

MEDITATIONS
IN THE
TEA ROOM

BY
M. P.

20





MEDITATIONS IN THE TEA ROOM.



Order is broke in thinges of weight,
Measure and meane who doth not flee,
Two thinges prevaile, money and sleight,
To seeme is better than to be.

THE EARL OF SURREY.

Meditations in the Tea Room.

BY

M.P.
(Augustine Birrell?)



LONDON :
PICKERING AND CO.,
196, PICCADILLY.
1879.



PREFACE.

 HESE my meditations are the result of those hours of leisure of which public life is for the most part made up.

Since they are the production of a Member of Parliament they will, I doubt not, be allowed some value; whether because all statements made by us are entitled to the respect they commonly receive, or because the true thoughts and views of a Member were never before publicly expressed, I care not to inquire.

I wish I could have gratified those of my constituents whom, in spite of their voting against me, I still represent, by putting my name upon the title-page of this little volume. But to have the courage of one's opinions is too dangerous a possession for me to claim—preferring, as I do, to have the good opinion of the world rather than to deserve it.





I.





I.

 N listening attentively, as is my habit, to the debates, I find that I travel far away from the business in hand as a consequence of following too closely those who discourse about it. That I may return to the point in issue I withdraw to the Tea Room and wait until my thoughts, driven and scattered in all directions, come back from the voyages upon which they have been sent.

Though I do not remember to have been able to notice anything novel, or indeed anything at all, whilst I continued on these journeys outwards, yet in returning pensively from some of them I have picked up curiosities which I had not noticed before. Why this should be so I know not. Perhaps it





10 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

happens because, when following another, we go out fast along a single path which he knows by experience, and, being abandoned at the end of it, we grope our way back again by many devious ways. Perhaps it is because we always walk backwards into the future, keeping our eyes fixed upon the nearest portion of the past; so that the discoveries we make and hold are ever something short of the farthest point that we have reached.

However this may be, it seems to me that we find what is fresh in retracing our steps rather than in running forwards; as we open up a new world by ascending the Nile till we come to the oldest.

Wherefore I care not to be of those who profess to remark the latest footstep and start forwards from the toe of it. On a globe such a manner of travelling onwards may be neither so easy, nor so direct, as going backwards—as any thoughtful person, especially if he happen to be a geographer, will at once admit.





Meditations in the Tea Room. 11

Prejudice apart, I can go very well to the east by turning my back upon Constantinople, and following the setting sun.

So when what we are pleased to call “the West” was discovered by Columbus he voyaged to “the East” of set purpose, carrying a letter to the Cham of Tartary, and only discovered America by unhappy accident. That he did, by taking this course, happen to run into so considerable an obstacle as a new world may seem to make against the manner of journeying which I, and Columbus before me, have adopted. But, for my part, I see in it rather a proof that novelty exists all around us, and that we are as likely to make discoveries by taking one road as another ; while any path will lead us forwards, and back again, if only we walk long enough right on.

In the complete cycle of eternity—if ever it be completed—the most distant future must touch and join the remotest past ; while the present is the



antipodes of both—as any geometrician can prove for such as may doubt.

Events are of little importance at the time of their birth. We do not understand them—for at first nothing speaks plainly—and when they have learned our own language they talk only commonplace.

As to the future we know the name of it, and that is all. So much of it as we can see is in effect the present. For the rest 'tis good to gamble with in many fashions.

But a mere trifle in the past is often, by its position, of a real magnitude unattainable by anything in all the time to come. Thus, to go back no further, we see that the existence of Adam and Eve is by the scientific treated as of vastly more interest and importance than that of all the millions in the latest census.

We may make much ado, unreflecting, over the marriage of a king. But ask Mr. Darwin whether





Meditations in the Tea Room. 13

it is comparable in significance to the courtship of the earliest oyster.

We should learn more from the first monkey, he would tell you, than from the last man.

Wherefore, let us set out from this our advanced position, and return upon our steps without delay.

* * *

It occurs to me here that I had not before mentioned any point, advanced or otherwise, to which I had been led. It is a fact, however, that I had listened for hours to a dispute concerning the image and legend to be stamped upon the half-pence for use in one of our distant provinces.

What a world lies behind us if we start from half-pence !





II.







II.

T was very natural that the first man who thought himself of more consequence than his neighbours should have desired to be king and reign over them ; but it is little short of marvellous that they should have ever allowed him to do so ; for, as Algernon Sidney observes, “there is no natural propensity in man or beast to monarchy.” Publicists generally refer the origin of kingship to some organizer and leader of a band of thieves and cut-throats, and suppose that, upon the success of their enterprise, they who had committed many crimes of treachery and violence submitted themselves to him who had committed more—hailed him *primus inter pares*, and thenceforth obeyed him, and at length his grand-daughters. Although



this explanation of the beginning of monarchy is less majestic than that theory of divine right which lingers yet about the world, it is I fancy the true one none the less.

It would seem then that the pillaging of neighbours was the first object of monarchical government, and all other States were, doubtless, organized to the same end. It is, however, commonly said that the State was formed for purposes of defence and protection: and this may be in a manner correct; for strategists are agreed in considering that such objects are best attained by a vigorous offensive.

I notice the basis of States not merely on account of the historical interest attaching to all speculation on such matters, but because a wrong opinion upon this subject is, as it seems to me, at the root of many of the sayings and doings of persons of a fitful importance and influence amongst us. To me it seems an error to suppose that all large bodies exist for the preservation of the small, and that strength is only to





be exercised in order to the perpetuation of weakness. It is in observing the real reason for the existence of States, that we must recognize how foolish it is to affect sympathy for the little assemblies of men who, because they speak a language known to no people but themselves, imagine they are entitled to all the advantages obtained by those who receive as their due large concessions representing exactly that which they could take were they minded to be rapacious.

Whatever be the form of its government, a State is but a body of a certain number whose prejudices or interests do on the whole separate them less from one another than from the rest of the world. The unity amongst these people is not generally considerable, yet autonomy, or independence, they ever profess to desire above all earthly things. Severance from other nations, selfish and sacred isolation from those who dwell beyond a river, or a hill, this is what they really hope to obtain. But men whose



own domain is well secured by the obstacles of nature are of all the most predatory and aggressive. Security from attack soon suggests the invasion of less protected districts. No people would trouble itself with any State organization, if its only hope and purpose were to remain in contentment at home. The individual, the family, the tribe, may make up the nation ; but the soldier, the company, the regiment, are necessary to constitute the State. Then, since there must be a country to forage over, or no supplies can come to hand, the taxpayer, the collector, the treasurer, are as needful as the sabre and the gun. An apparatus for supplying the means to act in concert must be provided ; and it is for this that we have tyrannies, monarchies, federations, and republics, with all their details of princedoms and duchies, their senates, parliaments, and assemblies, each with its appropriate incidents of cabinet, and cabal, caucus, and committee.

I know that it is the common view of lawyers



that the State exists to secure the liberties of its citizens ; but ecclesiastics are not less firmly persuaded that its chief purpose is to provide tithe, and oppress heretics. The people at large cannot be said to agree very well as to what is the true object of the State ; though each class looks for favour to itself, and is ready to complain loudly of similar pretensions in others.

Now it is the merest affectation to speak of the State as the means of securing liberty, however that word be defined ; for, as there can be no State without subjects, it is plain that freedom is exactly that which all States are designed to abolish. If, however, we once concede that we desire the “liberty of wise restraint,” we admit that coercion is what we would have in the place of choice. Obedience, though compelled by the gentle force of the humanest laws, is no more freedom than is abject submission to a conquering host. This is no reproach to civilization ; only it is sometimes not sufficiently remembered by reformers.



Though those who have chosen to themselves rulers have deliberately agreed not for the future to do as they please, some do nevertheless constantly struggle to get back something of what by implication they have relinquished. These things they call their rights, and speak as though they had possessed and afterwards unjustly lost them; yet the matter may be otherwise regarded, if one will be impartial. If the companions of the Vikings did not reserve their "rights of conscience," this is probably because they knew nothing of the pleasure to be derived from praying in a manner annoying to one's fellows; but it is quite possible that they were aware of this pastime, and thought it unseemly. If they did not stipulate for the "liberty of the press," this is perhaps because the liberties taken by the press were not known to them; though it may be that they disliked such licence, and resolved to forego it. Those who have erected for posterity a cathedral or a palace may intentionally have built them a prison as well.

I would not be understood to mean that the people have been unwise in fighting for charters, liberties, and settlements ; yet the benefits they have most hardly obtained are, perhaps, not so valuable as is commonly supposed, and are never enjoyed by any except the turbulent and litigious. The dissent of a dissenter makes, after all, but a small part of his life ; a Quaker were little the worse for having to take an oath now and then ; nor does a peaceful citizen often need a *habeas corpus*. Many of those incidents of our Constitution which some represent as its foundations are in fact no more than luxuries of complaint, enjoyed by reason of the general content which prevails. And this wide-spread contentedness itself is the effect less of freedom at home than of domination abroad. “A few paternal acres” will satisfy nothing but an ox.

If we as a nation have given up following each of us his own will, this can be made up to us only by our taking away at least as much liberty from other





24 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

peoples. Perfect anarchy may remain within its own city or country, but they who consent to be governed by the opinion of one or the majority among them, will repay themselves for their concessions at home by dictating elsewhere. When the French, after 1793, found that even republicans must follow some one, they strove to make the world follow them ; and the tricolour at once began to go the round of Europe. They had not, on the whole, that large measure of success which has attended the arms of England ; and, having for near a century been in the end unhappy in their enterprises abroad, they have not yet turned themselves to the righting of minute grievances at home. Had Villeneuve won Trafalgar, and Bonaparte Waterloo, I daresay there would now be saltspoons and sugar-tongs in Paris.

As to ourselves, we probably make more laws than suffice, merely to have the pleasure of widely enforcing them. We impose freedom on some who have





Meditations in the Tea Room. 25

not cared to seek it ; and although for public instruction we dredge up from the bottom of the ocean creatures which at once explode in our hands, we do not remember the lesson when we would remove accustomed pressure from off other low organizations.

Moreover, the knowledge that we are rulers in so many lands leads us to make every-day use of what were of old the privileges of kings. The right by which our people claim to know the policy and opinions of the Government they do not rest more upon the justice of their deciding upon the laws they are to obey than on their responsibility for the effect which they suppose their precepts and example will have upon nations their dependents or disciples. It is as a "sovereign people" that they hold themselves entitled to lay at the foot of the throne their bills and petitions, with no other explanation than *C'est notre plaisir* ; to which the monarch meekly replies, *Le Roy le veult*. In England the Parliament is to the king what in France the king was to the Parliament.





26 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

Perhaps it is strange that persons having resolved to decree something, should then throw upon another the responsibility of declaring their will to be their law. But men have ever sought the sanction of vague authority for acts which they consider important ; and, while some would listen to nothing less than the word of an oracle, others have been satisfied with tossing up a halfpenny. Which of these processes the making of Acts of Parliament most resembles I leave to the decision of those who have to study and enforce them.

I have now intimated sufficiently my view that the State is rather a fortress, mainly designed for offence, than a city for refuge. If, with old writers, we liken it to a ship, then with a man-of-war only can we make the comparison. It serves for us to live in, but cramps us sadly ; securely enough we can sleep, but soundly never ; discipline we bear, but love it no more than lime-juice. Meanwhile we can play the policeman, the missionary, and the bandit, as we



choose. We can free the slave by enslaving his master ; we can dress whole nations in our shoddy ; we can dye that shoddy scarlet ; we can teach the goose-step where we please ; and cry “ March ! ” And all this throughout an Empire so extensive that in some part of it thousands are always sitting down to breakfast—provided they are not dying of hunger.

**

It is from this point that we may best consider the position of a statesman. To him the State is precisely what his army is to a general, and, as there have been “retreating generals” and “fighting generals”—both very valuable in their way—so have we had statesmen who, though commanding in chief, have spent all their energies in defending some little block-house upon the frontier of affairs while the enemy has been at the gates of their capital. So have we seen, since Commodus, those who preferred the common arena, and ignoble weapons, to all that higher strategy which their position required them to employ. Many





28 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

have we followed, gallant as the warriors of La Vendée, or obstinate as that corporal who chose to be decapitated by a Chinaman rather than admit that the Queen of England is less directly descended from the moon than is the Celestial emperor himself. But few indeed are the names of those who, over all the field of battle, and through all the dust and smoke of the combat, have looked forth with calmness to act with wisdom. Numberless are the little commanders whose plan for ten campaigns has been simply to relax discipline, to improve the rations, or to carry forward a banner because it is an old one.

Why should we not





III.



III.



KNOW not where my reflections would have led me—for indeed I was about to ask myself some momentous question, to which, I doubt not, I had a sufficient answer prepared—but at that instant of time, which, as will have been noticed, I have carefully indicated, I was summoned to take my part in a division of the House.

When, after performing this ceremony, I returned to my arm-chair, I began to remember—with something of regret, perhaps—that in a space of twenty minutes I had pledged myself to a war with some dusky potentate whose name I could not recall to my memory—if, indeed, I had ever heard it. Thus my thoughts, which I hoped I had marked in such





32 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

manner that I could return and pick them up at my leisure, were nowhere to be found again. In vain did I at last remember to have arrived at the point, “Why should we not . . . ?” Beyond this all was waste, desolate, uncertain.

Ah, had I but been allowed to ask, and answer, that one question, who can say what results would not have followed? Let not any one conclude that I should have settled nothing remarkable because, up to that point, no definite gain had resulted from my cogitations. By what right do you, who jog his elbow, complain that the astronomer discovers no new planet? In that moment it has passed across the heavens . . . perhaps.

But, did I design to abandon here the attempt to regain the place at which just now I had arrived, should I allow myself to accept each invitation to digression as it presents itself, what a chapter could I not write on division bells! No; I am resolved to resume, if possible, the line of my interrupted meditations.





Meditations in the Tea Room. 33

And yet, those division-bells. Tyrannous as are all bells, surely they are the most tyrannical. Even now they obtrude themselves upon me, though I have firmly determined to think no more about them.

Still they repeat that they will be heard, in spite of all my resolutions not to listen. For other alarms—to consider them for a moment only—I could find much to say in their praise. The dinner-bell, the passing-bell, and even the marriage-bells, all of them commend themselves to us, to our toleration, at the least; for are not dinners, death, and marriage indispensable? and do not men forget to dine, to marry, and to die? But why divide? and why so often? Is union grown so common, and so harmful, that we must all be seeking occasions for distrust and difference? And are we so likely to forget to express our dissent that we must have bells and clappers to recall us from our indifference?

I will finish here this chapter, for I am resolved to



tolerate in it no digression, and I see that I am fast approaching some delicate questions relating to factions and their justification. Here, then, they shall not intrude. I banish them, I banish them to the other side of the page, which, unless you look there, is as good as the end of eternity.





IV.





IV.

NOTHING could well be more interesting, nor more unprofitable, than to inquire whether among savages the best or the worst of them first formed for themselves some ruling power. Probably both sorts of men found their account in choosing chiefs and making laws. It is to be supposed that all see some advantage in having a Government, whatever be the form of it; and it is to the credit of the English that they have contrived to believe themselves free, and to find themselves happy, under so many degrees of restraint as they have at different times submitted to.

The English Constitution has this supreme merit: it is founded on mutual jealousy and distrust, and



not upon any of those refined but false theories which have dazzled and deceived so many other nations. "Si l'on veut lire," says Montesquieu, "l'admirable ouvrage de Tacite sur les mœurs des Germains, on verra que c'est d'eux que les Anglais ont tiré l'idée de leur gouvernement politique. Ce beau système a été trouvé dans les bois." I like this sylvan origin, and to trace its indications in the upas trees and other growths which even now overshadow us. But to find a system of Government in the woods, what was it? The explanation is not far to seek. The essential part of our political system has over and over again been declared to consist in the checks provided to prevent any portion of the Government from acting for itself and carrying out fully its own views of what is expedient.

Sometimes this means compromise, at others coercion; it has meant civil war. But whichever form it may take, it is always part of our system.

In the woods, it may be, there was less com-

promise than now, and more coercion, or of a different sort ; but, perhaps, men at that time only opposed proposals when they disapproved of them, and not because honour or consistency, as we say now, obliged them to differ always from certain other men. That a method which allows the King to declare war against the friends of the people, the Commons to ordain taxes for the Lords to pay them, and the Peers to reject bills which affect only the Commons, should have been found so agreeable to our natures, can only be accounted for by noticing that each has his chance of annoying another. Thus a constant irritation is kept up, very stimulating to the body politic, which seems to find it—as Lord Shaftesbury, in his “Characteristics,” says some did the itch—“highly acceptable and delightful.”

I suppose it was in the woods, where they had observed the good effects of having now a fine day and then a wet one, that our ancestors conceived the



happy idea of governing by party. Other nations might think a king, or a democracy, perfection for governing purposes—no one ever thought that half the people, or rather more, would invariably be in the right. But to be ruled first by one half and then by the other—first by those we esteem wise and good, and then by those we hold foolish and vicious—this was a fresh notion indeed, and every way worthy of woodmen.

It is the fault of some representative Governments that they have allowed many to persuade themselves that the people are righteously governed only when their own wishes, or those of the majority, prevail. Yet no active politician believes anything of the kind. The representatives of the people—being chosen to rule them and bind them, as kings were chosen to do—have afterwards only that obligation to which an absolute monarch was subject; they must act honestly, but are not bound to please. I have no doubt that this proposition will seem false to many

who have the franchise, and who think themselves entitled to be consulted at every turn in affairs. Their leaders, however—even the most popular of them—have acted in accordance with the theory I have just expressed. Without staying to accumulate examples of this, I may mention the appeal which in 1874 Mr. Gladstone's Government made from the Parliament to the electors. That he had misunderstood the wishes of the nation, every one knows, and he fell from power to post-cards as a consequence of his mistake. But nobody imagines that he would have consulted the country at all had he suspected that it was against him. It is equally certain that Lord Beaconsfield would have more than doubled his influence on the Continent in the autumn of 1877 if he had dissolved the Parliament, and had received the votes of the majority at the following election; but, knowing very well that of this there was no chance, he preferred to govern the people by those who represented them, but not



their opinions, rather than to give up either his policy or his place.

Whether or not party government is more absolute where the form of monarchy has been preserved, is a nice question. I am inclined to think that, where there is a Sovereign, Ministers may be more unscrupulous than where there is none ; for the theory that the Ministry are responsible for the advice they give to the Crown in effect converts that into mere counsel which else were an act done with their own hands ; and part of the popular wrath will be spent upon the King and his permanent executive, to the relief of his removable counsellors. This is not the less true now that the monarch is never in effect a member of the opposition. It was easy enough for George III. to take advantage of the unpopularity of the Coalition Ministry, for the term “ His Majesty’s Opposition ” then meant a body who received more of his confidence than did his Ministers ; but when no protest



from the throne is ever heard, whatever the Cabinet may resolve to do, it is impossible for the Sovereign not to share to a greater extent the unpopularity of a policy than it was in the days when the people were told that Hanover was contemplated by the King as a refuge from his Ministers and the acts they did in his name.

The principal difficulty which now stands in the way of those whose lot it is to govern by means of a party is caused by the large amount of accord which really exists amongst all the present electors and their representatives, although they are divided into factions professing different opinions. Agreement in principle has never yet prevented politicians by profession from opposing one another, and it has seldom been difference of opinion only which has kept them apart. Pitt would have been a Whig to his death, as he was on first entering the House of Commons, but that there were just then too many Whigs of ability, and when he did not receive a place



in the Rockingham Administration, he saw open to him a greater part as a Tory than as a Whig of secondary importance. There is not room in an English party for two men of remarkable abilities and of nearly the same age or experience; as there is not place for two kings on one throne. If a man of ambition begins party life without much consideration—as is generally the case—it is often a necessity that he shall change his allegiance, and carry his abilities where they are most needed, or can most benefit himself. It is no more a reproach to Pitt that he started as a Whig than to Erskine that he changed the uniform of the army for the robe of Chancellor; nor was Mr. Gladstone more bound to remain a Tory than Fox was. If a party leader remain an Englishman we have all we can expect from the best of them. But though, as I have said, the chiefs will contrive not to be on the same side, it is nevertheless difficult to set in array against each other large bodies of men who have no great gain to

hope for in the strife, and no real hatred for those they have been taught to call their enemies. Now it is the fact that at present there is nothing a man can ask for at the hands of the Legislature which he is not as likely to get from one of our political parties as from the other; although one of them may give freely from another's store, and the other grudgingly from its own.

It is a terrible thing to contemplate, but it is possible that the complete prevalence of liberal opinions may in time do away altogether the Liberal party; and it is indeed questionable whether this process has not already proceeded so far, by reason of the enlightenment and political education of every one, that it is high time to invent some disputable matters to replace the worn-out ones we received from our grandfathers, lest our boasted system of Government perish in general agreement.

It is easy to see that theology will form the subject of our next divisions; but even these





46 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

quarrels may be arranged, and the question what to divide about will present itself anew. Believing, as I firmly do, that it is of vital importance to the interests of our country that the Russells and the Stanleys, the Cavendishes and the Grenvilles, should continue their hereditary controversies after all the old topics of liberty of the subject, divine right, trial by jury, and non-resistance have been for ever laid to rest, I would suggest that science shall next become the prey of our politicians. I am sure that houses who have wrangled over the colour of their stockings, the curliness of their wigs, and the number and position of the patches on their cheeks, will be at no loss to make cases of conscience out of the problems which natural science so plentifully presents. Besides the improvement in our foreign policy which would result from the withdrawal of it from the number of subjects criticized and explained on the hustings, there would be the further advantage to be found in the assistance which astronomers, and all



other professors of the sciences and arts, could not fail to derive from learning the views of those free and independent electors who have never hitherto been abashed by any problem presented to them, no matter how new or abstruse.

It is as necessary to the working of our Government that there should be two parties in the State as that there should be King, Lords, and Commons ; but it is not at all required that these parties should diverge upon questions of vital or even of considerable importance to the body politic ; and it were to be wished that, whether they are reduced to it by necessity or not, they would contrive to contend about matters of such a nature that the strife could bring no good to the foes of the country. Let it be recognized that parties are designed for the purpose of giving to every one his turn in governing his fellows, which agreement renders impossible, and then divide into opposing bands upon any question you please—as whether an acid should take precedence of an alkali,





48 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

If it be said that the public would not interest itself on such questions enough to divide and do battle about them, I would point to that well-known loyalty which each party attributes to itself, and which I concede impartially to both of them. Should the chiefs of our present factions command it, their followers would interest themselves in algebra, or pronounce a firm opinion as to the composition of the sun, so soon as they had learned what declaration was expected of them on that subject.

There is one resource of English party leaders which those of other nations possess for the most part in a far less degree ; and it is so useful that we should be careful to use it economically : as when once employed it can never be replaced. One might despair of producing new combinations, so as to give each party its turn, were it not for the fact that, not having a universal suffrage, we have the means of adding to one of our parties from time



to time ; and so producing among the electors that balance which is effected in the House of Lords by the creation of Peers. When equilibrium has been produced as the result of our political seesawing, things can only be set moving again by adding to one of the equalized forces ; and this increase has so far been always given to one party. Perhaps, however, when the considerable fund of low life, which happily is yet left to us, shall have been completely exhausted, we shall see the opposite party enlarged by the granting to wealth, or high intelligence, a greater share of power than that to which mere existence entitles every man ; for, it is probable that those who either are able or are rich will ever exceed in number all those who have nothing whatever in common with their fellows but a descent from Adam, large as this number is. Therefore when the suffrage has been for some time as universal as life I shall expect to see it become as unequal.

Let then the Liberals have a care, lest hasten-

ing the reduction of all classes to a level as complete and wide as that of the waters in Noah's flood, they do but prepare for such a heaping of them up in mountains as we have seen ever since the moon has shone upon us. Let them be warned by that alacrity which the Tories have shown to anticipate the people's demand for a larger share in public affairs. Let them consider whether, whenever a lower stratum is added to their party, the upper layer of that party is not at once detached from it, and after a time joined on to the body of their opponents. When a dozen new members take their seats on your benches to the left of the Left, it is not unlikely that the Centre is not over-pleased with the crowding, and that the Right receives some fugitives, and succours them.

* * *

There are some who so dislike government by party that they will support no faction when it

is in power. This often makes a departed Ministry appear to have more friends than it has.



If an Opposition had many scruples it would never return to power.



To sacrifice one's honour to one's party is so unselfish an act that our most generous statesmen have not hesitated to do it.



In affairs no men are consistent except the dishonest.



A Ministry, when it is certain to be soon displaced, should undertake some grand and impossible piece of legislation, or policy, that they may appear to fall in a splendid cause, rather than in the ordinary ignoble vicissitude of things.



A Conservative administration is in politics what a "mixed occupation" is in war.







V.



1. *What is the relationship between the two groups of people in the photograph?*

2. *What is the relationship between the two groups of people in the photograph?*



3. *What is the relationship between the two groups of people in the photograph?*

4. *What is the relationship between the two groups of people in the photograph?*



V.



HAVE thought sometimes that we may hear sermons in our churches—and not the worst ones preached there—though there be no one in the pulpit. Indeed, I doubt if so much wisdom was ever heard inside the church of Stoke Poges as Gray contrived to discover in its churchyard.

It is a habit of mine, when there is much difference of opinion in the Palace of Westminster, to take a turn round the Abbey. Not that I seek the gratification of beholding once active opponents of my party now reduced to the silence of dust and the repose of marble. Not that I would find quiet ; for, indeed, there are more voices about one in those deserted aisles than ever were in Babel. Nor do I go





56 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

altogether to hearken to the great voice of Johnson, nor to catch the modulated tones of Cowley. I pass by all that remains of the glory of a hundred victories only to stay where blossoms the first of Tudor roses. Yet I am little of a botanist.

In fact all the roses of York and Lancaster, to say nothing of those of Shiraz, have no part in my coming to the Abbey, or pausing in my rambles about it, and I only mentioned them by way of showing that I have really visited the ancient Minister, and to indicate, in a manner in keeping with the scenes around me, that I have reached the point I had started for.



It is an excellent allegory wherein this kingdom is represented, which we see on the tomb of Henry VII.—a crown hanging on a bush. Whether the diadem of these realms fell among the gorse on the field of Bosworth, or whether we are to understand, as we look on the emblem of kingly power, that the thorns





Meditations in the Tea Room. 57

sprang up and choked it, you may—for you will—decide according to your prejudices. I know very well the idea of it which will best please some cynical republican as he notices what it is that wears the crown. It will not occur to him that he has before him an image of the divinity that doth hedge a king; and, for that matter, perhaps he has not. For me, I care not what it signifies; 'tis a rare allegory, and I have my own notion of its meaning. Thank heaven, I can revere the crown as much when I see it on a bush as though, in all pomp, it surmounted a cushion.

Let no one suppose that I came near to writing another word, or that I intend here any disrespect to the cushion; which, I take it, is neither more nor less than public consent made palpable and very becomingly represented. I profess that I have as much reverence for popular opinion in this shape as in any other of the many forms it from time to time assumes.

It is well, I am sure, that we should consider some-





58 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

times this sculpture of the crown upon the bush ; for we are apt, when we see the regalia in all their splendour, to forget that the ermine does not stand upright of itself. In the chapel at Westminster we find a useful comment on the observation of Sir Thomas Elyot, that "*Apparayle may be wel a parte of maistree.*"

Your *Highness* is right. The other part of majesty may be the will of the sovereign. Your *Lownesses* have reason. It may be a bramble.

* * *

Kings, like diamonds, serve many useful ends, and are yet most esteemed because of their rarity.

* * *

Rebellion is the prerogative of subjects.





VI.





VI.

T once was a saying, popular in this country, and M. de Montalembert quotes it with approval, that "the public business of England is the private business of every Englishman." Yet, attractive as this statement must be to all those whose private business consists chiefly of interference in the affairs of others, I think that it is as fallacious and harmful as are most fine-sounding axioms. One might say, with not less justice, that the public-houses of England are the private houses of every Englishman. And perhaps this sentiment may some day serve to captivate a meeting of total abstainers, or a conclave of domestic drunkards.

The public business of England, even if it be the business of every Englishman, is his public business,



and not his private business at all. He is not to consider that he has as good a right to be made intimately acquainted with the affairs of his country as with the doings in his counting-house; for, although any public act may affect him and his particular interests, it will certainly touch hundreds of his countrymen whose private affairs are as sacred as his own. An instance on the teaching of this maxim as a principle of government has before now, and lately, led to the establishment for a time of another rule, which may be stated thus, "The private business of every Englishman is the public business of England." That such a notion must, if generally received, postpone all foreign affairs, and all far-seeing policy, to the accomplishment of such purposes as commend themselves to the retail trader in grievances, and the manufacturer of discontent for home consumption, does not need proof in the face of instances still recent. If any one requires to be convinced, let him turn to the statutes of the last ten years, let him read

the questions to Ministers and the debates in the Houses of Parliament, and, noticing how much they are occupied with “the private business of every Englishman,” let him calculate the effect of what he sees upon the “public business” of a country which must certainly have a good deal, if only it were attended to.

People who are once persuaded that public business is the same thing as their own private adventures think themselves not less qualified to judge of the one than of the other ; and, moreover, would conduct both upon the same principles. The tradesman who, in the County Court, has seen his neighbour compelled to retire behind a coveted party-wall, or driven from a convenient, but exclusive, pump, loudly proclaims the suppression of international trespass by means of international litigation. The vestryman who has beheld the police force of his parish reduced by two, and yet finds no corresponding diminution in the number of his spoons, insists that our armaments



are an unnecessary burden to a country with which no one is at war. The right of Englishmen to know what is doing it is too late now to deny ; but it is most unfortunate that the admission of a man's claim to be informed of events should always lead him to suppose himself acknowledged to be able to understand their importance to him. If a physician tell me that I have a fever, I do not conceive that I am then called upon to prescribe to him what remedy he shall send me ; nor, if he propose one, do I dispute with him upon its merits while my disease hastens on its course. If patients were to become cavillers and disputants, we should find ourselves visited by a rhetorician whenever we had sent for the doctor.

But from our considering the public business in the same light as that which we best understand, it results that administrators are chosen, not because they are men likely to work wisely, or to commit few indiscretions, but for their skill in justifying blunders before an assembly which practically consists of the whole



populace. Any one who can prove, like Pangloss, that each fresh disaster is but another step towards perfection, is more likely to be made a Minister than he who has judgment enough to avoid compromising situations. Even so, if each Minister had none but his own mistakes to explain, or to suffer for, it would be possible to have sometimes in power a cautious and intelligent statesman, though he were gifted with dumbness ; but, seeing that every member of a Government is liable to be called upon to defend measures, or negligence, for which he is in no way to blame, we are obliged to give our seals and portfolios to the fluent rather than to the thoughtful. Constant criticism by the public, coupled with their valued, but somewhat turbulent, procedure by meeting and petition, necessitate the maintenance by the State of a company of professional apologists. Moreover, the existence in Parliament of an Opposition, whose business it is to appear always as the Devil's advocate, and to argue against everything which



keeps them from enjoying the honours, emoluments, and patronage incident to office, must fill every Ministry with men whose sole recommendation to their associates is to be found in their readiness of speech and their freedom from scrupulosity.

The constitutional theory that the existence of an organized Opposition is justified by the obligation they are under to take office if their enemies are driven from it, must surely have originated when office was more dangerous, and less desired, than now. It is but a small consolation to the country at large to be assured that if Mr. A. wrongly turns out the Right Honourable Mr. B., then Mr. A. will be put in the vacant place, with a certain salary, and will some day be turned out again, a Right Honourable, with a certain pension. Perhaps endowment—a fashionable remedy now applied to many troublesome factions—might diminish the injustice done by Oppositions in giving some chance to the conscience which they may be induced with, though no one has yet seen



it at work. The rule which withholds from the Opposition all reward until they can become Ministers in their turn, seems not very just ; since it is admitted that they are all the while performing valuable services to the State, and that they are as necessary a part of Parliamentary Government as the Ministry itself. But, besides that deserving demagogues, worthy agitators, and thoughtful critics of the course of Cabinets may go down to the grave in some suburban cemetery, though they may have merited to sleep by Fox ; besides that they themselves may never have been rewarded for their labours by one ounce of public gold, nor their wives by one invitation to Court ; there is yet another, and, perhaps, not smaller evil. When the Opposition enters upon office, the public service must be less regarded than the claims of those who have long denounced the public servants, and, amidst the shuffling and puzzle-fitting which occurs, he who has successfully attacked the Postmaster-General is likely enough to be gratified



with the control of the Navy, or the direction of foreign affairs.

Now, were the Opposition even more recognized by the State—had they their robes and staves of office, their places and their titles, their salaries, perquisites, and patronage—would not there be more of dignity in their dissent, more of value in their support, more of reason in their consistency? If now the Opposition approve of a Government proposal, the Ministry is convicted of playing the game of its opponents, or the Opposition is jeered at by its foes, and pitied for incompetence by its friends. Whether the momentary agreement between the hostile factions may be to the public advantage there is no public to consider, for all of them are triumphing in one camp or weeping in the other.

It would be not the least of the recommendations to a paid Opposition that many who are anxious to be out of office would be content to leave it; and some who have a talent for being always on the un-





popular side could gratify their taste without injury to their position.

The observations which, in the solitude of the Tea Room, I address to myself, are invariably of a noble and disinterested sort ; but—whereas I am capable of the utmost magnanimity—*myself*, being indeed extremely myselfish, receives coldly most of my best advice. I constantly find that the beautiful and philosophic *egoism* which has been preached to me, and which I am prepared to accept, is by *myself* twisted into a grasping *egotism*, having in it no more of philosophy than has an heraldic motto. Thus it happened that no sooner had I, without a thought of my own advantage, made to myself the above remarks concerning the benefits to be derived from the institution of a subsidized Opposition, than myself slipped into its commendation of my scheme the suggestion that of such an Opposition I might hope to be one. In vain did I disclaim any such notion. No, said I to





70 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

myself, the limits must be narrowed and jealously guarded. Merit only must be admitted into the Opposition, as into the Ministry. At this myself fell a laughing at me, and I saw it was useless at that time to continue my argument.





VII.







VII.

OW small are the results produced by some of the grandest schemes of man ! Here has one of the most prized of our constitutional rights, in the course of its plenary exercise, produced nothing but a pain in the smallest of my toes. Yes, it has taken some hundred thousand signatures to cause me to sink into this chair instead of loitering in the lobby. For it was my misfortune just now to encounter a treatise in favour of the increased propagation of small-pox ; which pamphlet—composed by a herbalistic medicine-man, and attached to a piece of paper, of the size and shape of a stair-carpet, and adorned with the signatures of all the blockheads of a country town—was being rolled along the passages to the House which I chanced to be leaving. What





74 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

is a human foot, though of the largest, opposed to the progress of such a mass as this? How long might a Patagonian hope to stay the course of it? For me, I did not delay it an instant; earning thus, I hope, some gratitude from its authors. Onward it trundled, onward, and into that limbo where it shall harmlessly moulder away, unread, unthought of.

What a machinery, I say again, to effect nothing but the crushing of one toe. Who were the worse, I ask myself, if this ceremony were abolished out of hand. Would the petitioners gain anything—even small-pox—if their petition were read, or if they could return the medicine-man to Parliament—as he doubtless hopes they will be able to do ere long—that he might there recite it?

Perfectly ordered representation of every man in a State may lead to not less injustice than does absolute tyranny. Indeed, a minority will often find its rights secured to it by a despot, for the very reason that it cannot even prefer complaints in the august presence





of its ruler, from which presence the majority are also excluded. But when grievances may be freely stated and submitted to the general vote, it will many times happen that freedom to remonstrate against injustice will be held a sufficient reason for allowing wrongs to go unredressed. Indeed, I imagine that we should treat all the brutes with much less consideration and kindness could we only be informed by them of their views upon the position they hold among us.

The mere right to remonstrate need bring but little good to those who exercise it ; and the right to control legislation and the acts of the executive may also be of but slight avail in the hands of people of small knowledge and many prejudices. In fact, such a right, which is all that the people can have in the most complete democracy, cannot amount to *more* than the power to reverse the course of Government by destroying every ruler in the land—an amount of freedom by which every despotism is necessarily limited. And, just as the excesses of revolutionists





76 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

are invariably punished with harshness, so constant interference in affairs of State provokes reprisals, and does not the less incline rulers to resentment, because its recurrence happens to be guaranteed by a constitution.

It may well be doubted whether, if a man have most of those material advantages which it is in the power of the State to secure to him, he were not wise to decline the franchise should it be offered. So long as one must remain in comparative poverty, is it not mere folly to give up one's claim to pity and charity, in return for an acknowledgment that we can put into the ballot-box as much as any one in the land ? An apparent injustice may be worth more than many a position of credit, and has before now formed the stock-in-trade of a whole nation. Nor are such riches the most transitory ; for he who has been oppressed leaves a goodly heritage to his children ; and perhaps it is due to the testamentary instinct that men bear real wrongs so quietly, content in handing down to





their descendants a valuable property in the amends to be made them.

* * *

Is it not a favourite theory of certain philosophers that happiness is, in the main, equally distributed to every one, and that there is no gain nor loss which is not accompanied by some compensating circumstance? And is this theory less applicable to the vicissitudes of politics than to the falling of an acorn from a tree before the snout of a pig beneath its branches? Thus an extension of the franchise necessitated the diminution of bribery, and many a borough acquired dignity, yet grudged the price of it. Here bribery was probably forbidden less in the interest of the sellers than of the purchasers of votes. In fact, the votes are still bought as effectually as ever, though they are paid for in a coin which men are more willing to part with than that of the realm—such as principles, faith, and honour. A mob which cannot hope to obtain a shilling a-piece can still exact obedience to its whim—



fical dictation ; and this not less at the hustings than in times of revolutionary tumult, though less obviously. It is impossible not to perceive that in times when the multitude were not consulted on matters of State, they had their seasons of licence, and triumphed by turns over each of the elements of Government to which ordinarily they owed subjection. Such were the Saturnalia and the Feast of Fools. The Church was derided in the ceremonies of the Abbot of Unreason ; the Monarchy in the junketings of Lords of Misrule, and the May-day royalty of chimney-sweepers.

But does not Davus still pluck his master by the ear ? Of a truth he does, and compels him to hearken to most impudent diatribes and questionings. Are the Lords of Misrule now deprived of their lordship, or is their dominion confirmed and extended ? Let me confess myself of the opinion of those who would attribute the vanishing of these mediæval pastimes to the spread of political responsi-

bility. But, though it be true that there are no such ebullitions of popular nonsense as formerly, it is equally certain that there is at no time any repression of it. There are no overflowing floods of folly, perhaps ; but a constant and fertilizing stream of it none the less meanders through the land.

Yes, the Abbot of Unreason is represented in Parliament, as, of course, he should be. I gainsay not his rights. Was not the Nabob of Arcot represented by seven or eight members ? The Nabob, who paid no taxes. The Nabob, to whom the army of this realm was no burden, the laws of it no protection, the Oh, what have I thought ? what have I not written ? On my word, I fear to push this parallel further, for the Nabob was disfranchised.

* *

Truly it is an awful subject, this of representation. Let us agree that every interest shall be represented. The individual, pure and simple—if there be such—shall have a voting paper, though he have not a



pocket to put it in. But concerning what shall he vote? Not about pockets, for he has none. Not about land, except such as he may be buried in. Or let him vote that he have the land and the purse of his neighbour, in order to give himself a *locus standi* in the discussion of rents and taxes. This is what must happen if the franchise is allotted to individuals and not to their position. Perhaps it were well to award a vote to every man and another to certain properties; as in some countries is seen, where he who buys a certain estate obtains with it a seat in the legislative body, or a pew in the parish church. Is there more reason why every man's vote should be of the same power as another's, than there is for all voices being of one compass? Surely if the *sans culotte* is to have his say on the making of breeches, the wearer of them might be heard once in his native right as *sans culotte*, and again in his artificial character of *culotté*.

At present breeches, coats, and even bonnets, are,



Meditations in the Tea Room. 81

like the Nabob of Arcot at the time I alluded to, largely represented in the Legislature. And this is why I stopped so abruptly on the point of disfranchisement. Can I not enfranchise my friend *Sans Culotte* without disfranchising the breeches he so longs to jump into ?

* * *

After all, has a man any right of choice whatever merely because he is in the world, seeing it was left to others to choose whether he ever should enter it ?

* * *

Public wrongs are but popular rights in embryo.







VIII.





VIII.

 T was good advice that Pythagoras gave to philosophers that they should abstain from beans—which was to say the ballot. This counsel was probably given in the interests of philosophy and the professors of wisdom, yet this should not prevent us from seeing how greatly such refraining from affairs would be to the advantage of the public service.

It may be doubted whether a philosopher ought even to be allowed to vote; but certainly he should never be elected by the people to represent them, unless they deliberately wish to forego their share in the government of the country. For I cannot suppose that the multitude will ever guide themselves by any recognized philosophy, or that a philosopher will



go by any other rules than the general ones of his favourite system.

Tell the people that, according to the laws of eternal wisdom, and immutable justice, they are entitled to a vote and a pot of beer a-piece, and their sweet reasonableness were worthy the groves of Academe ; but call upon them afterwards to pay a fair price for these commodities, and none but the laughing philosopher would recognize them for his disciples.

Nothing, if we may believe public men, has contributed more to the advance of this country than our habit of not pressing arguments and measures to their logical conclusions. To enthusiastic doctrinaires this seems mere cowardice, or badness of heart. Reasonable men, who know that moderate purity is as sufficient in the conduct of ordinary affairs as in our supply of water, will be content with a reform which makes things innocuous, but leaves them still short of medicinal.





Who shall say that a few follies and excesses are not as natural, and, on the whole, as beneficial, in the life of a nation as of a man? Are not some wrongs the necessary occasion of virtues? Could this country ever have earned praise for its generosity if it had always been just? Beginning with so small a property, we could never have made a gift—such as that graceful one of the Ionian Islands—had we not first taken to ourselves the property of others.

* * *

There are certain vices which are far more attractive, even to an honest man, than some virtues; and to a healthy and vigorous people it will ever be of less use to preach calculating rectitude of conduct, than to be satisfied with guiding a little those impulses which in their main direction are good, though the reasoning from which they spring is none of the closest.

It has always pleased the English to assume an heroic character, and this is not consistent with



methodical correctness ; or, at least, has not hitherto been thought so. When we have all read and practised the theories of Mr. Mill, and his followers, we may, perhaps, be a very worthy people, and, like all of that class, play but a small part in the world.

I console myself by thinking that it matters little to us what doctrines we feed on, so long as we do not alter the other and more substantial part of our diet. The country which deprives us fairly of our commerce will re-create a terrible horde of bandits. We shall hardly admit that we have no right to prefer our own interests to those of the great family of nations—as we have lately been taught—when we fairly perceive that our philanthropy has lost us some material advantage.

* * *

Those members of the upper class who, with the intention of reconciling working people to their position in life, proclaim the dignity of labour, while at the same time they attempt a sort of *renaissance*



Meditations in the Tea Room. 89

among the vulgar, do not seem to me to take the surest way to the end they have in view. A laborious aristocracy will be easily tolerated by the people ; who have reason to think all exertion unpleasant. So our upper classes are safe while they hunt, manage the roads and bridges, and drill the militia ; but let them occupy their time with the gentler arts and sciences, and they will conciliate fewer than thy fancy.

Who would be governed by painters and decorators?

Amiable socialists who talk of improving the masses up to the intellectual level of those above them, by way of producing contentment, do not understand the question so well as those whom they would instruct. No revolutionists ever yet desired to level society, either upwards or downwards ; but many have used this name for turning it upside down.

A just distribution of the burdens of taxation will never please the greater number of the people, until



there are in the State more rich men than poor ones.

* * *

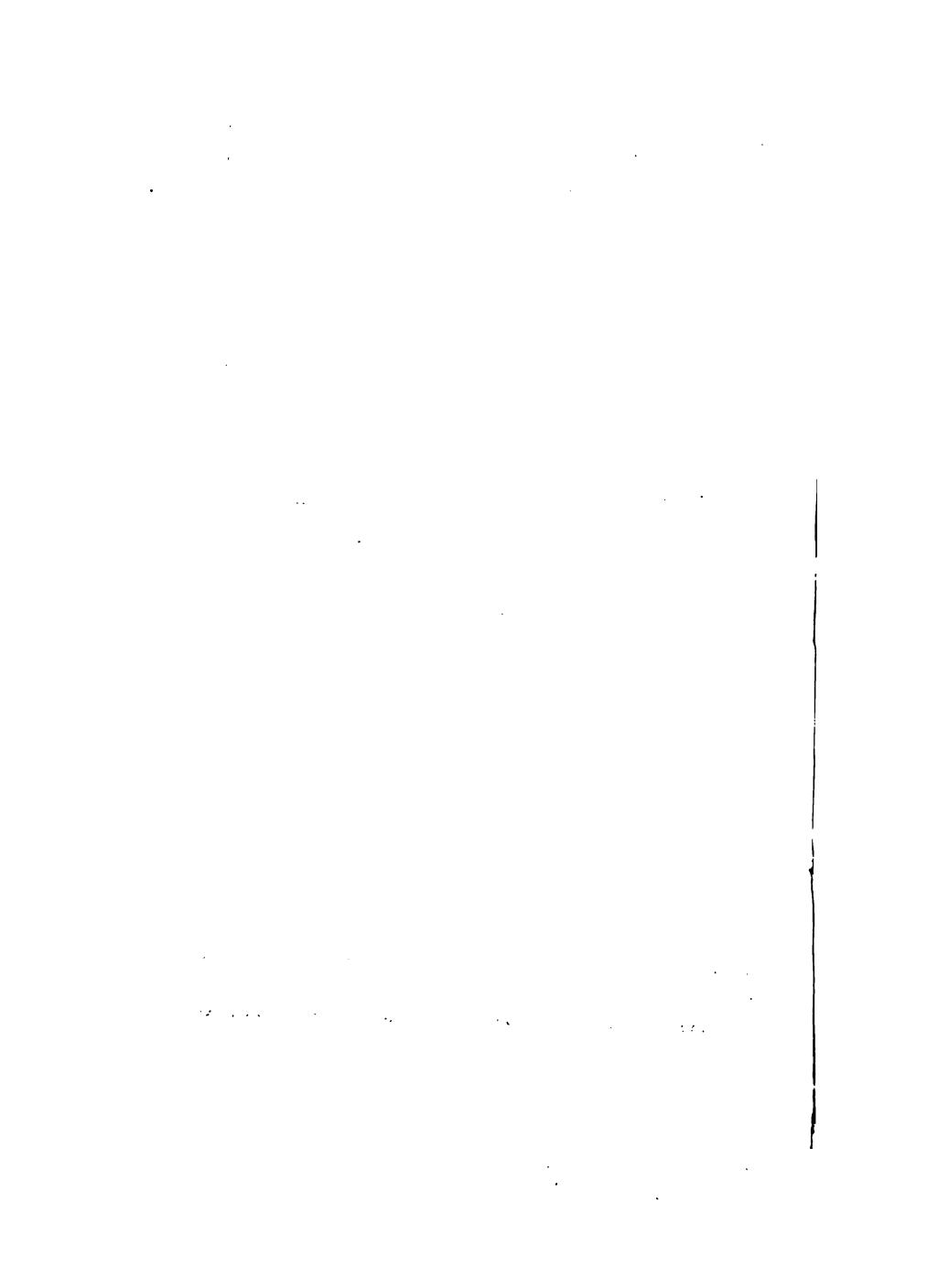
The greatest good to the greatest number imposes on the majority so severe a discipline that they are content to take less than their share.





IX.







IX.

MUCH was not foreseen by those who first advocated free trade that has followed inevitably the prevalence of their opinions.

I may, for all I know, have seen the above sentence in a newspaper; but it is true none the less—and my dinner suggested it to me.

I suppose few will deny that of late years there has been less of insularity—some would say less of patriotism—amongst us than there was, and undoubtedly there has been more foreign meat and drink for us.

Questions of cause and effect are always difficult or doubtful, and I do not generally care to hazard an opinion on such subjects, but the coincidence between our cosmopolitan philanthropy and our free breakfast-



tables, covered with the food of every clime, seems too complete to be accidental.

That the modern popular affection of citizenship of the world is due to a pabulum of some sort, I suppose no one will be inclined to deny. What the pabulum is may be a nice matter for controversy. You may look for it where you will; but, for my part, I think it is to be found on the wharves along the Thames.

They who ate out of the same dish were in all times taken to be in some way attached; and one cannot doubt that the souls of all the *convives*—which the ancients wisely held inhabited their stomachs—were brought into harmony by the sameness of their food. We know that all the lotus-eaters thought alike; and we have been told of “the Caledonian” that so long as he drank claret he was “firm and erect”—an attitude which we may suppose his present potations do not assist him to preserve.

Then is it not natural to expect that an *olla podrida*, composed of ingredients from all parts of the globe, will produce in those who make it their diet a mixture of sentiments and sympathies such as now composes public opinion in this country?

I like not to push a theory too far, yet the proportion in which we consume the products of foreign countries might, perhaps, enable us to calculate the amount of influence which they severally exercise upon our hearts and understandings. If this be so, a new and inviting field is open to statisticians; and practical statesmen may see a fresh means of controlling popular opinion in the manipulation of Customs duties.

Who will maintain that the embargoes laid by us upon the goods of our enemies did not aggravate our differences, and so prolong our wars? And by this light can any one fail to see a new and touching significance in the application of the phrase “the



most favoured nation" to that people whose fruits we encourage ourselves to eat?

It admits of easy proof that in the days of enthusiasm for the abolition of slavery there was a considerable taste for "old Jamaica," and our sugar was not then made from the beet-roots of France.

The propagation of some epidemics has now been definitively traced to the importation of the germs of them in products from abroad ; and he would be rash indeed who should pretend that some microscope of the future will not discover the embryos of Socialism in a German sausage, and a new scheme of colour in a China orange.

That a country should be judged by its exports is inevitable ; yet some nations have, doubtless, thereby suffered injustice. They will make few friends whose chief export is rhubarb ; but disorderly troops of emigrants seem to conciliate even less good feeling.

If, as seems not unlikely, we feel more kindly towards other nations than they do towards us, is



Meditations in the Tea Room. 97

not this what we should expect from our partaking of their champagne, caviare, and macaroni, their olives, oranges, and bananas, while we send them in return only coal, cotton-cloth, and bars of iron ?





X.



TABLE II
Effect of Annealing on the Mechanical Properties of Poly(1,4-Phenylene Terephthalic Anhydride)

Annealing Temperature (°C)	Tensile Strength (kg/cm ²)		Elongation at Break (%)	
	Unannealed	Annealed	Unannealed	Annealed
200	100	100	100	100
250	100	100	100	100
300	100	100	100	100
350	100	100	100	100
400	100	100	100	100
450	100	100	100	100
500	100	100	100	100
550	100	100	100	100
600	100	100	100	100
650	100	100	100	100
700	100	100	100	100
750	100	100	100	100
800	100	100	100	100
850	100	100	100	100
900	100	100	100	100
950	100	100	100	100
1000	100	100	100	100

annealing temperature. The mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are summarized in Table II.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.

It is evident from the data in Table II that the mechanical properties of the poly(1,4-phenylene terephthalic anhydride) are not affected by annealing.



X.



DISTINCTION is always made between our home and our foreign affairs in that separate Ministers are responsible for the conduct of each of them. Here, however, the difference too often ceases. The Home Secretary must frequently deal with selfish, unreasonable, and criminal persons and classes ; but he never meets with any whose conduct is so immoral as that of diplomatists of high rank ; he finds none so unworthy of credit and of confidence as the most respectable potentates of Europe, because no one in England has such strong incentives to faithlessness as they who may lose a throne by keeping their word. Because all foreign policy must rely for its success upon the force by which, if necessary, it will be supported, and



not upon justice or reason, what is called international law is in effect non-existent—the dream of jurists seeking to enlarge their field of action. That municipal law exists is due—though Baron Pufendorf says the contrary—not to any convention or contract between murderers, thieves, and other members of society, but to the fact that these offenders are in the power of the rest of the community, because they are, relatively, few in number. In hardly any country can an individual seriously wrong another without being made by the majority to suffer for it. The misdeeds of great Powers must, however, be avenged by those only who are hurt by them. If a strong nation unprovokedly assault a weak one, to what authority is there any appeal? To none; unless some States shall see a chance of intervening to their own advantage. Because there is no impartial force above all nations, there is no law for them either, except in the text-books. A pirate is only “*hostis humani generis*” because he has a little fleet,



which the navy of no State is too weak to vanquish.

The executive administering home affairs is strong enough to compel the observance of the ordinary rules of honest conduct ; but it is seldom certain that the greatest wrongdoer abroad can be corrected.

This should result in a complete variance between the rules applicable to the conduct of business abroad and at home ; and it is necessary, though unusual, to judge acts done with reference to the Himalayas, or the Nile, by a standard wholly inappropriate to any event which can happen on the Cotswolds or the Thames.

Our domiciliary policy may properly be determined by the consideration of what is most fair to all, for that can be enforced. But beyond our shores expediency must be our sole motive ; though justice, and even generosity may be put forward, and, perhaps, coincide with it. By expediency I do not mean that which too many only know by this



name. It is not expedient to invariably show—like the “treaty-breaking Lusitanians”—so little regard for our engagements as never to be trusted at all; but constant literal fidelity is equally undesirable, because when our enemies can be sure of the course which in any event we shall take, they cannot be embarrassed in their calculations as they would be were our attitude problematical. True expediency, however, is only to be detected after a nice examination of the questions at issue, and after a thorough consideration of all the effects, immediate and remote, direct and collateral, of any action we may take. It resembles, indeed, true selfishness; which is understood to include charity, liberality, and politeness—provided you enjoy the exercise of these qualities more than uncharitableness, meanness, and incivility. The opinion that honesty is the best policy—that is, the most profitable on the whole—has been more widely expressed than acted on; and if complete and undeviating probity is meant, this, perhaps,



has never anywhere been tried. But there is no doubt that a policy into which an unusually large amount of honesty enters is, on utilitarian grounds, to be preferred to any other. Character is the best possession within the reach of those who have not splendid abilities; but it is not so necessary to a great genius, who can easily find means to excuse any deviation from rules of prudence or counsellings of honour. Still there is so much danger in permitting freedom of action to any one, that all but the most commanding intelligences should be rigorously held to the observance of the common principles. Thus one act of perfidy may be excused if it result in the gain of a province; and that though it create distrust of our word. But the next flagrant untruth should gain twenty provinces, or it will not be justifiable; for, as original mistrust among our neighbours will have been increased in more than geometrical progression, so the object for which we incur it should grow in the same proportion.



Inconsistency may sometimes be expedient. Thus it is well now and then to quarrel a little with our best friends, lest they presume on our complaisance. We may take an opportunity to affix an enemy— that he may hope for our alliance, and so refrain from entering into intimate relations with his well-wishers, or perhaps treat them with scorn or indifference. Besides, however, the immediate gain which the temporary abandonment of an accustomed line of conduct may bring, there remains uncertainty as to the policy of the future ; and, though some may see in this nothing but harm, it is to be remembered in favour of devious statesmanship that there is in the world more of hope than of fear. No nation will at a serious crisis willingly offend a Government whose course is in doubt, even though that Government would not be very formidable when a declared adversary ; for many can do us much good who can do us no positive harm.

Rank injustice and wrong may also now and then



be expedient, as it may be necessary to show some, who think that we have abandoned certain weapons which we formerly wielded to some purpose, that our hand has not forgot its cunning. A civilized nation will not be respected of barbarians by reason of its civility alone.

Atonement for injuries which we have done it is most dangerous to make, especially in circumstances where it may be supposed that fear or great caution was the cause of repentance ; but it may well be expedient to profess to repent of crimes never committed, as when we have profited by another's misfortunes but have not occasioned them. Though condolence and sympathy, unless they bring with them substantial offerings, are not often well received by the suffering, yet contrition has long been held as efficacious as reparation ; and, involving as it does something of humiliation, even men often prefer it to all other amends.

The chief difficulty in doing what is most expedient



arises from the obstinate reluctance of men to admit that they have pursued a wrong policy; and few who realize their faults already committed have the courage to take a fresh departure.

In pursuing a policy of expediency England has some advantages over other States, and should be studious to make the most of them. It is by some reproached to our Constitution that it disables us from pursuing a "consistent foreign policy." Now it is just here that I see one of its chief excellences. We can lead a scrupulous public to commit or sanction gross breaches of faith, by persuading them that to break a promise made by their political opponents is equivalent to observing one given by themselves. We can change our policy by changing our Ministers, and at the same time aver that we have called so and so to the head of affairs because such a one had not rightly represented our views; the fact being, that we have altered our opinion as to what our interests demand. It is excusable in the Red Indian that he



is puzzled by the non-observance of the covenants made with him by the United States, because he cannot be expected to understand that “ministerial responsibility” means national absolution from the performance of distasteful engagements ; but it is lamentable that this doctrine is ignored by many in more favoured countries, even to our own. “La perfide Albion” must remain entitled to that name so long as we possess a constitutional Government ; for perfidy, which was an accident under Philip of Macedon, is inevitable under Victoria. Though an absolute monarch may occasionally be treacherous—or gifted with a hundred other vices—yet few have not thought it disgraceful to have their promises slighted, even by themselves. But the dignity of a populace is not easily touched, and a free nation will never be very fearful of incurring blame which, being distributed over many millions of wrong-doers, is by no one felt as personally degrading. The difference in this respect between an absolute and a limited



monarchy, is exactly analogous to that which distinguishes a private merchant from a limited company. As there is a keeper of the King's conscience, whose office dates from the period when public acts were done at the will and pleasure of the sovereign—so now would there be a Minister doing such duty for the nation had the nation any conscience to be kept.

This matter is nicely put by Sir Francis Palgrave where he says, “The liability incurred by the nation is refracted through so many media, that it is dispersed before reaching the foot of the throne.”

It merely remains to add that the media are changed from time to time—like the charcoal of filters—and they and the odium they have collected are thrown away together.

It is in a manner the misfortune of States that they must constantly exchange treaties and understandings, just as private persons send newspapers and Christmas-cards to distant acquaintances, merely to show that no rupture has yet occurred between

them. It is not often unfair to disregard any obligation which may be insisted on as arising out of such a correspondence; since the bad faith is in fact on the part of those who claim the performance of a promise made in mere courtesy. Besides this, a nation which makes any concession to another, and receives no real equivalent, is always in such a position that by municipal law the grant might be avoided on the ground of duress. Few reputations are so good as that of Joan of Arc, yet she has earned from France eternal gratitude, and from the Pope perhaps canonization, for having enabled her country to abolish the Treaty of Troyes—I hardly know who would blame the Empress-Queen for avoiding a treaty made with Frederick the Great; and the engagement to keep Napoleon on the Isle of Elba was hardly a good consideration to him for a promise to stay there.

Though immemorial usage would seem to show that but slight blame attaches to statesmen who in





112 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

the interest of their country do not scruple to break the most solemn engagements, yet there has of late years been some complaint of the little regard paid to their word by sovereigns and their advisers. In truth, the telling of lies is a practice which, though some have condemned it, many have in all time defended; insomuch that Grotius, in naming the philosophers who have justified this form of deception, mentions Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero, together with the Stoicks "*qui inter sapientis dotes ponunt mentiri ubi et quomodo oportet.*"

* * *

Honesty is disgusting to many men of fine feeling because it is represented as a good investment.





XI.





XI.

ONE of the most difficult matters in connection with a foreign policy is the forming of alliances, whether holy or profane. These, whatever may be the pretext for them, are really made to check the growth of political friendships between the allied States and certain others which they are suspected to be predisposed to consort with. The first point necessary to an alliance is therefore distrust; and it is because this element is seldom or never wanting between States that compacts of the most affectionate character are so easily made; and it is for the same reason that they so soon fall to pieces. Those whose interests really coincide will support each other without any formal agreement so long as the coincidence endures, and mere



allies will never co-operate longer than suits their convenience.

Too much fear has often been felt in England at rumours of secret pacts binding certain sovereigns to give one another all help against all comers. In effect, such confederacies, being founded on mutual differences, are of little more utility than was the companionship of the collier and the fuller in house-keeping. Yet it is not easy to reject an alliance if another State propose it ; though much offence may be given elsewhere if a treaty be openly made. The safest course, perhaps, is to conclude the alliance suggested, and carefully to conceal it. If afterwards it becomes necessary to recede from the engagement, this will appear unrighteous to those only who suffer through such action being taken ; for no one is ever offended by acts which redound to his advantage, though some, to save appearances, may profess to regret their occurrence.

Moreover, he who brings to light an underhand



negociation, and refuses to be bound by his promises made in the course of it, will often be credited with repentance, and received among the most rigidly righteous with all those honours the due of sinners who recant.

He who is judicious will take care rather to offend the good and generous than the ill-conditioned and unscrupulous; since the former will often forbear when they have the most just cause of offence, and will find in an attitude of dignified reproach all that satisfaction which only warfare and spoil can afford to the latter.

* * *

Where three are hostile to each other, there is always ground to expect an alliance of two.

* * *

It very frequently happens that to make an enemy among nations is the surest way to gain a friend; and if one does not fear to take this course, he may even turn several of his foes into useful allies. I



hardly know a better example of this than is given by Colbert in his "Testament Politique," where he reminds—or perhaps informs—the king of the royal behaviour towards England, in these words: "Vous fûtes obligé cependant de reconnoître le Gouvernement présent d'Angleterre; quoi que votre inclination et votre justice vous portassent à protéger celui qui en était le Prince légitime; mais le procédé des Espagnols, qui prétendoient se prévaloir de l'aversion que vous témoigniez pour l'usurpation de Cromwel, et faire un traité avec lui à votre préjudice, vous fit recourir au seul moyen qui vous restoit pour vous mettre à convert de leur méchante volonté. Vous lui offrîtes votre médiation pour terminer à l'aimable le différent qui était survenu entre l'Angleterre et la Hollande, et que vous étiez bien aise d'assoupir, parce que vos ennemis en pouvoient tirer de l'avantage."

King Louis did a good turn in this matter; but who were his friends?

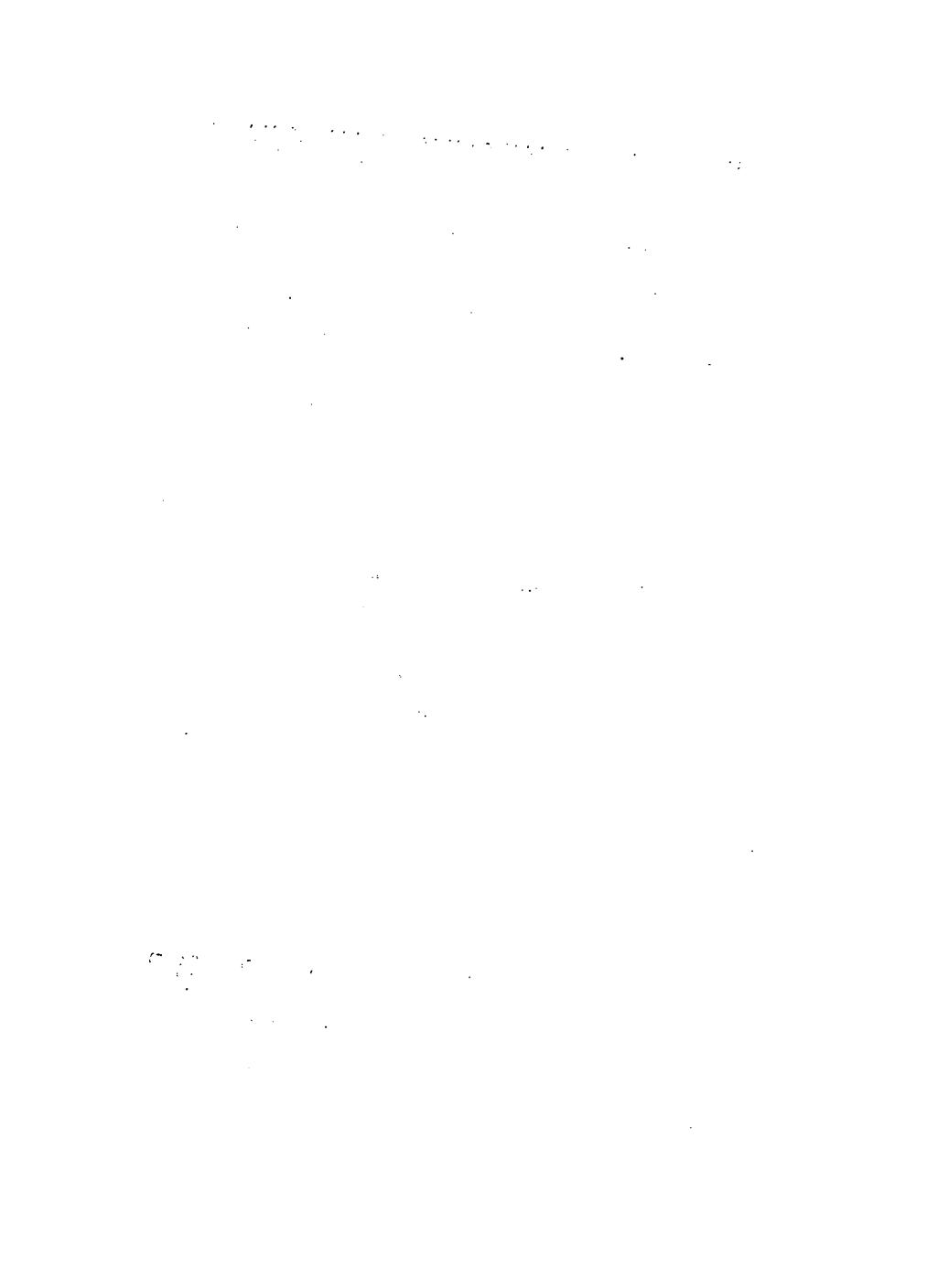
* * *



Meditations in the Tea Room. 119

It is surely only fair to recognize in favour of evil intentions that they sometimes confer more benefits than the best.

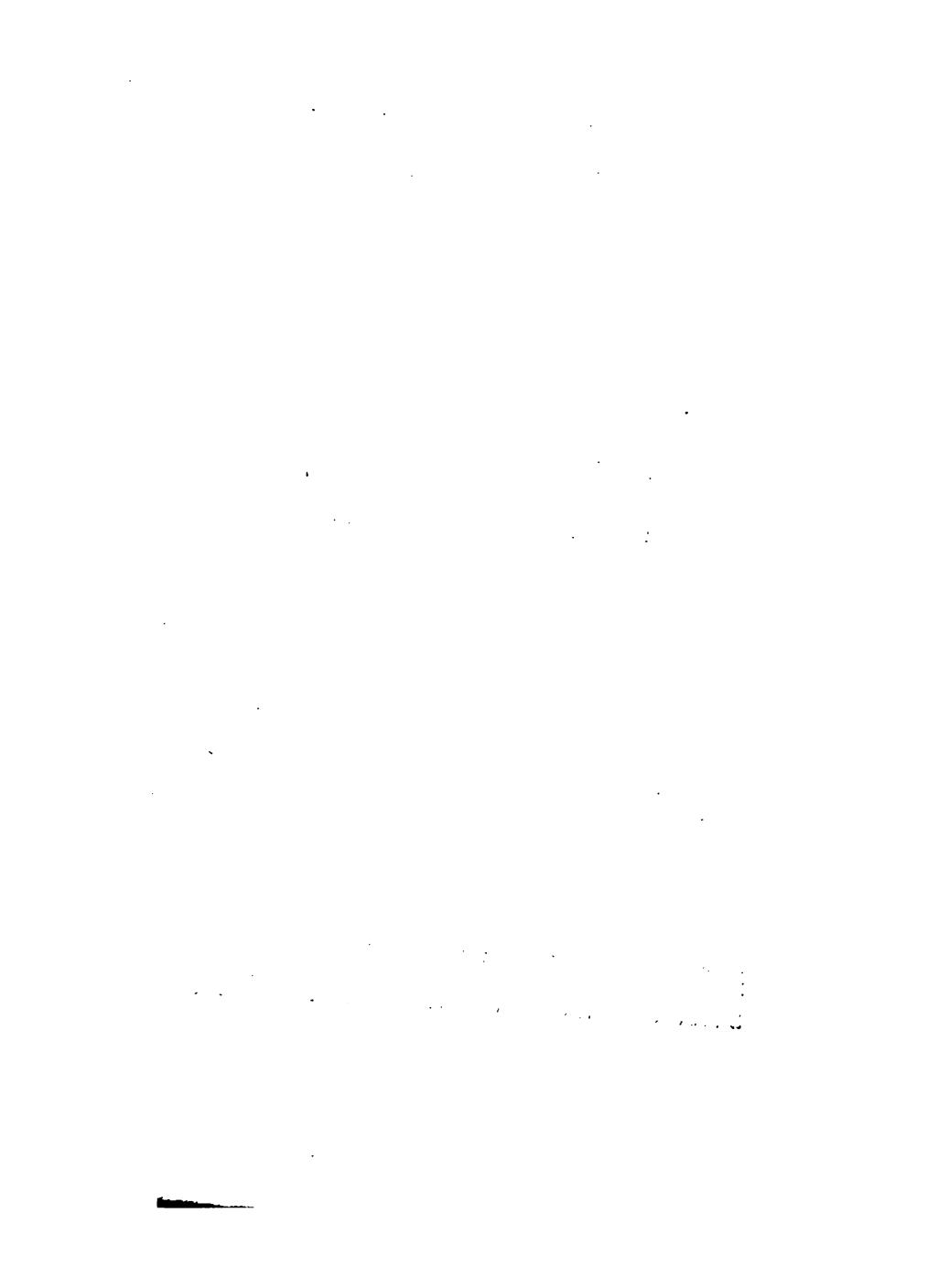






XII.







XII.

GO be unjust to most men, is to appear generous to the smaller number,

* * *

To act fairly by our friends is the surest way to offend them. But less than his due will satisfy an enemy.

* * *

Respect is only an accidental liking for those whose interests are in conflict with our own.

* * *

Peace has few charms for those who cannot employ it in celebrating their triumphs in war.

* * *





124 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

The success of the teaching that we are not to be proud when we do right, is shown by our glorying in what cannot pass for virtues.

* * *

The inequalities of rank are peculiarly gratifying to the lower classes, who delight in being able to attribute to social inferiority those misfortunes which often are the result of incapacity or idleness.

* * *

What most recommends party government is that it enables us to flander our rulers without sedition, and overthrow them without treason.

* * *

Reforms are more to be dreaded than revolutions ; for they cause less reaction.

* * *

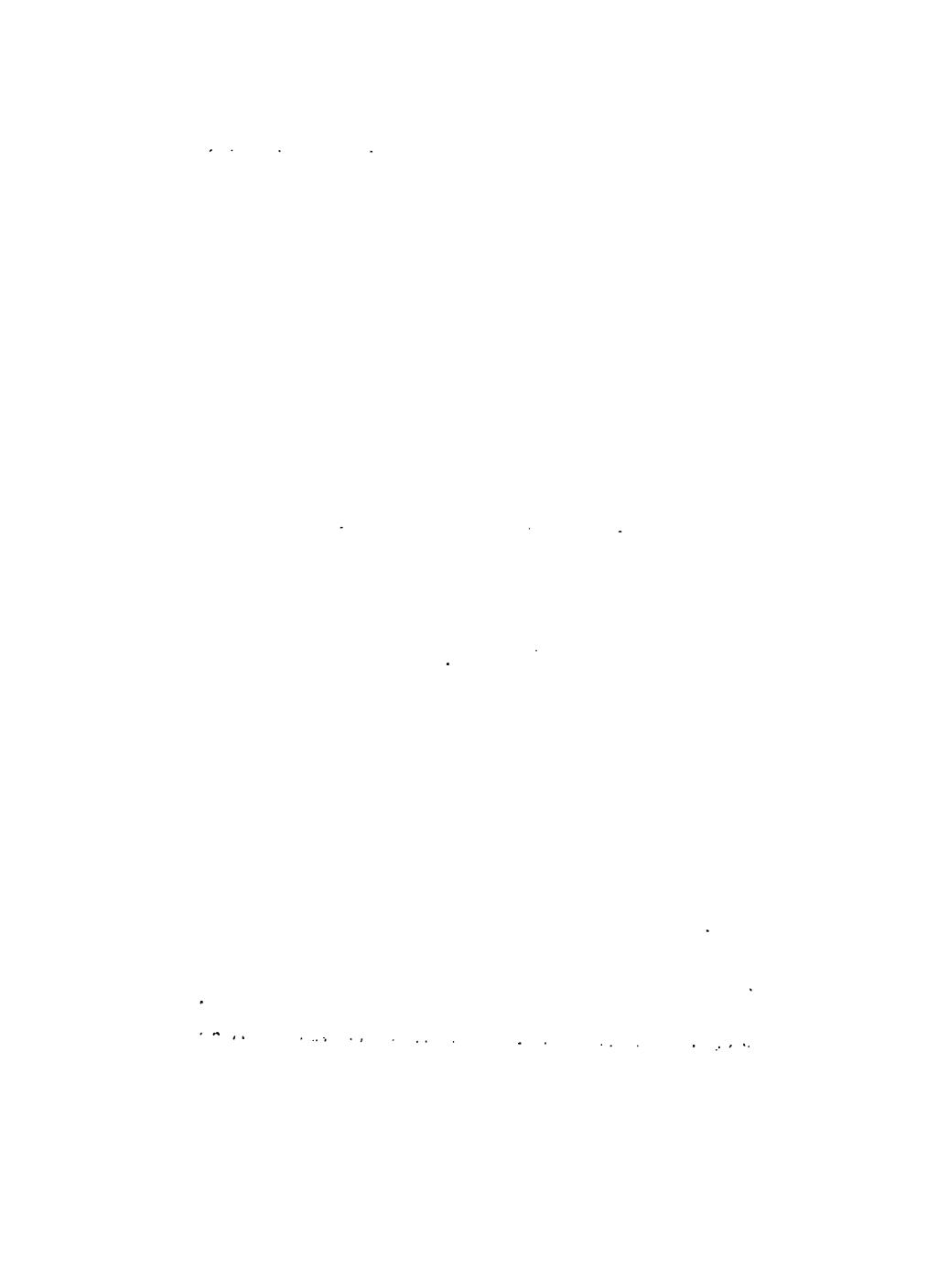
Many men do not change their opinions, because their opinions change them.





XIII.







XIII.



T follows from there being no controlling power to which one State may appeal for redress of injuries suffered at the hands of another, that each nation must, so far as it can, right its own wrongs—which means inflict others. This process cannot long have gone on between States of unequal force without its becoming necessary to employ deception to obtain delay, to provoke attack, or to find a pretext for quarrels already resolved upon. The nice question when to forsake a friend, or at what point one should begin to love one's enemies, naturally called into existence a new science, and a body of experts skilled in its mysteries.

I shall say nothing of that part of diplomacy which consists in making truthful statements concerning



past events, or promises which it is intended literally to fulfil ; for it is insignificant. But it is worth while to consider diplomacy in that wider field where bad faith, interest, anger, and folly, provide so much for it to do or to prevent ; and especially we may inquire whether our country is justified in using so little and so clumsily arts by which others have greatly profited.

We recognize that diplomacy is legitimate ; and —provided they effect nothing—we do not mind paying its professors liberally. Yet, should they gain us some advantage without having announced their intention of doing so, the public is straightway frightened and irritated. We do not object to our agents making use of falsehood in the conventional manner, but we are terribly shocked if it chance that they are believed ; because it is not possible to deceive a foreign Power without for a time misleading the public at home.

It is one—and not the least—of the difficulties

in which a thoroughly Constitutional Government finds itself that it is unable to make use of diplomacy in its integrity. There is a sort of *escamotage* to which publicity is ruin—yet the *escamoteurs* of England are at every turn called upon to show that they understand their business by explaining its intricacies to their employers. Our diplomacy must all be conducted as it is upon the stage when we are called upon to study the wiles of a Richelieu or Alberoni. Much conversation may be had with the envoy from the foreign Power, and it is expected to be carried on in whispers amidst conspicuous precautions against eaves-dropping ; but there must be no mystification of the pit and gallery. The asides must be loudly spoken, and we must have plenty of them. The envoy of the foreign Power of course hears them all ; though he has address enough to appear to listen to something else, to flirt with a woman, or to converse amicably with some gentleman of the Court.

Deceit—like another virtue or vice, according to



circumstances—should begin at home; for even if the public at large should chance to understand how advantageous it may be sometimes to pretend that we are misled by some trick of our enemy, they are yet too many to keep a calm countenance. It is therefore necessary for them to be deceived by their own negotiators, that they may not by their demeanour discover the truth to the enemy. But impatience to know the end, or to make it, too often prevails over every other consideration; the seed is dug up that the process of vegetation may be explored, and the fruit is lost which otherwise had come in its season. That we should not be deceived, and that often, is impossible; for foreigners we cannot compel to take us into their secrets, and that we can make a few of them tell us something is an excellent reason for many of their communications being untrue. Countless operations are open to foreign statesmen, which the *al fresco* nature of our own statecraft does not allow us to profit by.



Meditations in the Tea Room. 131

When Cavour sent the Sardinian army to fight in our quarrel against Russia, we thought it very friendly of him, and perhaps a little eccentric, so we called it chivalrous. But probably not two men in Piedmont suspected more than the simple grenadiers of Britain, or the careless *voltigeurs* of France, that nothing but the crown of Italy was being won in the trenches of Sebastopol. Had the Italians been informed what they were to get, it is certain they never would have got it.

Yet I would not choose to see amongst us any of that dinner-table diplomacy where a princess asks a monarch for a peach and a province in the same breath ; but if our people would extend to the conduct of public business a little of that faith which annually goes to the sowing of turnips, the harvest would, I venture to think, repay them for their confidence. Although the suffrage stands now at a very genteel level, I am not convinced that a majority of the voters can afford any help in detecting the real meaning which underlies the ambiguous memoranda



and despatches of kings and princes—even when these documents have been freely translated into English, and enriched with the comments of Fleet Street. Moreover, one of the main objects of diplomacy is to commit your adversary to all the consequences of a false move while silently taking measures to counteract it as soon as it is perceived. But a chorus of delight from a hundred platforms gives timely notice if we think we see the game of our opponents; and English statesmen are compelled to fence in a full light, while their antagonists circle about them protected by impenetrable night.

The contempt in which our diplomatists have long been held on the Continent is to be traced to some extent to our dislike of subtle negotiations, and our talent for giving and taking hard knocks; but much of it is the plain result of our choosing to set at defiance the rules of the game we play. I do not doubt that some amongst us are not displeased if they read in Philip de Comines how it was a common



saying in his time that the English lost by treaties what they had gained by arms, whenever they met the negociators of France—a fact which some writers have traced to the changeableness of our climate, by which they conceive that our character and all our institutions have been formed. It may be that the dulness and fickleness so often charged against us do at length begin to wear off—by reason, perhaps, of our frequent tours abroad ; for it is true that we have of late years made some show of skill in concluding treaties concerning beet-roots, ribbons, and light wines ; yet here we seem rather to have instructed our neighbours in political economy than over-reached them in wit.

But, putting out of the question our national peculiarities of character, we can hardly hope with our present Constitution to equal in the art of negociation those Powers whose government is in the hands of one or a few privileged persons. We recognize that, for offensive purposes, we are by land weak, and we





134 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

do not hesitate to admit that they speak with reason who compare us with a fish, and bid us not interfere in the quarrels of such dogs as are not of the sea. Now between the armies of Germany and of England there is not more difference than distinguishes our force in diplomacy from theirs. And, though all agree that we are bound to copy their drill-books, their maps, and their helmets, no one has hinted that we should systematically study and imitate those works of the great masters in diplomacy, which almost every country in Europe has produced. If we have to meet in war a bold enemy or a timid, a cunning or a simple, we seek to adapt our strategy and tactics to the occasion, and do not complain of our adversary for fighting in his own way. But should we have to deal with a nation given to fraud and trickery in affairs, we walk into every ambush, and set none in return ; or, if some energetic officer do so unbidden, we blame him and discharge him, but keep the captives he has made.





Meditations in the Tea Room. 135

Perhaps there were some comfort to be found in the reflection that in those manœuvres which, doubtless, were first invented by feeble States to enable them to preserve their lives against the strong, we are unskilled because we have no necessity to know or to practise them. But when the strongest nations are, as now we see them, the most accomplished in diplomacy, it is time to cease to console ourselves with anything less than a mastery of the science we have hitherto neglected. Without professing to enter minutely into the subjects upon which we need instruction, I cannot leave out of sight one or two matters to which it is indeed time that our attention were turned.

And, first, it must strike any one who has seen what has been passing of late years how important a part is played by those inventions termed "accomplished facts." The contention that all that occurs subsequently must have an influence on prior engagements, has never been so fully recognized as now ; though



it is long since Seneca wrote that “*Omnia esse debent eadem quæ fuerint cum promitterem ut promittentis fidem teneas.*” Concerning the “accomplished fact,” and how to produce it, whole treatises might be written ; but it is enough to suggest that much accomplishes itself if a great Power will it so, and we can easily supply our diplomatists with this weapon so soon as they shall have learned how to handle it.

Then, if there be any one thing profitable in diplomacy which we ignore more than another, it is humour. Never since the Locrians, having sworn to keep their compact as long as they stood upon earth and had heads upon their shoulders, put earth in their shoes and emptied it out again, throwing away the heads of garlick which they had placed on their shoulders—never have treaties been so jocosely broken as now. While Berlin is a very centre of cynic wit—while jests fly merrily about the East,—England alone adds nothing to the fun. That we shall always be honest, even fairly so, in the midst of



laxity and deceit, I cannot believe. My fear is that we may some day be tempted to commit robbery with violence. But surely it were better to cheat at cards or dice, laughing the while, than to play fairly till our stake is lost to sharpers, and then assault and spoil them on their road home with the plunder.

It is unfair to others that we let them out-wit us ; for we exact retribution for the injury our own stupidity has brought upon us—when, had we taken the trouble to be suspicious, we should have come to no harm.

If there be any remedy for our weakness in diplomacy, it is to be found I think in the extension of that power of party which is so admired a portion of our form of government. It was possible for absolute monarchs to avail themselves of those talents which formerly were brought to perfection amongst the little States of Italy ; and those whose battles at home were fought by mercenaries became free companions ready to wage the diplomatic wars of other



nations. Free parliamentary institutions are incompatible with the employment of such aid as this ; yet we cannot expect Englishmen, prejudiced in favour of the faction to which they and their families belong, to strive by every artifice which a county election or a party division would call forth to support a policy they dislike for the benefit of a Ministry they would gladly overthrow. Only, however, let our respective parties govern abroad as thoroughly as they are permitted to do at home, only let them be served as devotedly at every foreign Court as they are now in each municipal council, and English diplomacy would flourish as it never yet has done. Party government is surely best when most complete ; and we, who boast of being its inventors, permit a Liberal ambassador to present the remonstrance of a Tory administration, while an American Republican will not allow a Democrat to send his letters by the post.



XIV.





XIV.



HE Indian practice of putting into a young oyster a little figure of Buddha, to the end that it may grow into a pearl of price in the likeness of that deity, is not unlike our method of inculcating religious doctrine—except perhaps in the value of its results. A belief in the utility of such a process necessitates the maintenance of a body of artists to superintend it; and it is only natural that persons so highly skilled should from time to time seek to improve their designs, or to introduce them into new markets.

Those interested in dogma are naturally divided into the two classes of those who trade in it and those who believe in it. It, however, commonly happens that the traders are believers also, like the leather-seller of fable.





142 *Meditations in the Tea Room.*

The difficulties which—having troubled several generations—just now perplex so many of us, are due, as some think, to the refusal of the sellers of spiritual comfort, to change the character of their wares in accordance with the popular demand. Whether they are right or wrong in this, is a question more difficult to decide than perchance it seems to most churchwardens.

May it not reasonably be supposed that, in such matters, it were better to ascertain the prevailing taste, for the express purpose of declining to gratify it. For, since the whole theory of religious teaching goes upon the assumption that men are most averse from what they chiefly require, it would seem to follow that the best Church will be that which is least in harmony with its congregation.

I estimate lightly the flagellations which a man bestows upon himself, but lighter those laid on at his command by his own servants.

Concord and unanimity are well enough in some



places, but a little reverence is not less desirable in others ; though I do not say that anything is of itself deserving of reverence, for I will enter on no such perilous argument.

I am not yet persuaded that agreement and harmony are priceless ; and perhaps they are too dearly bought by concessions of money on the one side against independence on the other. We are never tired of declaring that princes never hear the truth, and we profess to pity them accordingly ; but, for ourselves, we go to learn our failings from those to whom we give alms, and whom we occasionally threaten to deprive of their savings when we like not their homilies.

A sturdy fault-finder were worth much to a free populace ; yet this is no sooner admitted by them, than, with Syrian generosity, they would reward him for his wholesome rebukes. Now, should he afterwards venture to correct them again, he is hated for his ingratitude.



What then shall a poor saint find to do, if he care neither to preach in the desert to deaf stones, nor to live pompously in a palace of the State? When the sinner is patron he must be reproved gently, or he will not listen to his mentor; perhaps he will muzzle him; probably he will starve him.

The difficulty is no new one, as the remedies that have been sought for it show. Some have tried to be independent in a gown and girdle. No one has been honest in more raiment; few, perhaps, in so much. Riches or poverty can either of them give independence: but the poverty must be absolute—the possession of nothing, not even of a want; and the riches must be the ownership of the world—and, perhaps, of a star or two beyond it.

Independence guaranteed is but subjection to the guarantor; for no power can against itself uphold freedom of action. This view of the matter does not, however, often commend itself to those who are protected; from which it sometimes happens that

they are oppressed by their protectors in return for inconvenient manifestations of liberty.

The Church would be more independent if it were not connected with State ; but then it would have to confine its action within narrower limits. It could work its will upon a congregation of enthusiastic devotees, while those who are not devoted would neither attend its ceremonies nor complain about them. In fact, its position would be that of the theatres instead of that of the telegraphs.

That the unregenerate secular masses should control their spiritual teachers in doctrine and ritual, harrying them in profane courts of law, and subjecting them to the wholesome discipline of Her Majesty's prisons, might surprise a heathen who had not been led to reflect upon the necessity for obedience in all branches of the public service. We are assured that in the island of Utopia the priests were all of them men of excellent virtue ; but that there were very few of them, as a consequence of so high a



standard being insisted on. It is therefore probable that no priestly Utopian was allowed to stand sometimes at the altar and sometimes at the bar of lay tribunals. An Utopian conscience would, I imagine, have preserved a clergyman from such offences as might entail such degradation. But, perhaps, the Utopians did not regard their religion as a sort of gymnastics necessary to be taught to every one up to a certain point ; a view which requires more professors than one small island can produce of high quality.

If I were of the priesthood—not of that superlative Utopian order, but a good stout canon of to-day—I would have no more of this State interference. I would cut the knot at once, and make off with all the endowments I could lay hands on.

Yes, when the people begin to speak to me of duty to them, and obedience in return for exceptional privileges, I would throw away the crutches of State support, and pose as a crippled martyr ; demeaning

myself so sadly that my wallet and my wealth should not be thought of by spoilers, as being evidently no consolation to me in my trouble.

The mouse should journey no more with the frog. The roads are safer than they were wont to be in times past ; and, if one can but get hold of property, one may now contrive to keep it very well. Peers no longer strip the lead off our roofs ; and there is no king who might dare to look into the coffers of a body of sectaries, who ask for no aid but the ordinary help of the parish constable, no privilege but that of being the equals of the Pope of Rome and Mr. Spurgeon.

It is an advantage of this course that it may be made to appear a very noble one.







XV.





XV.

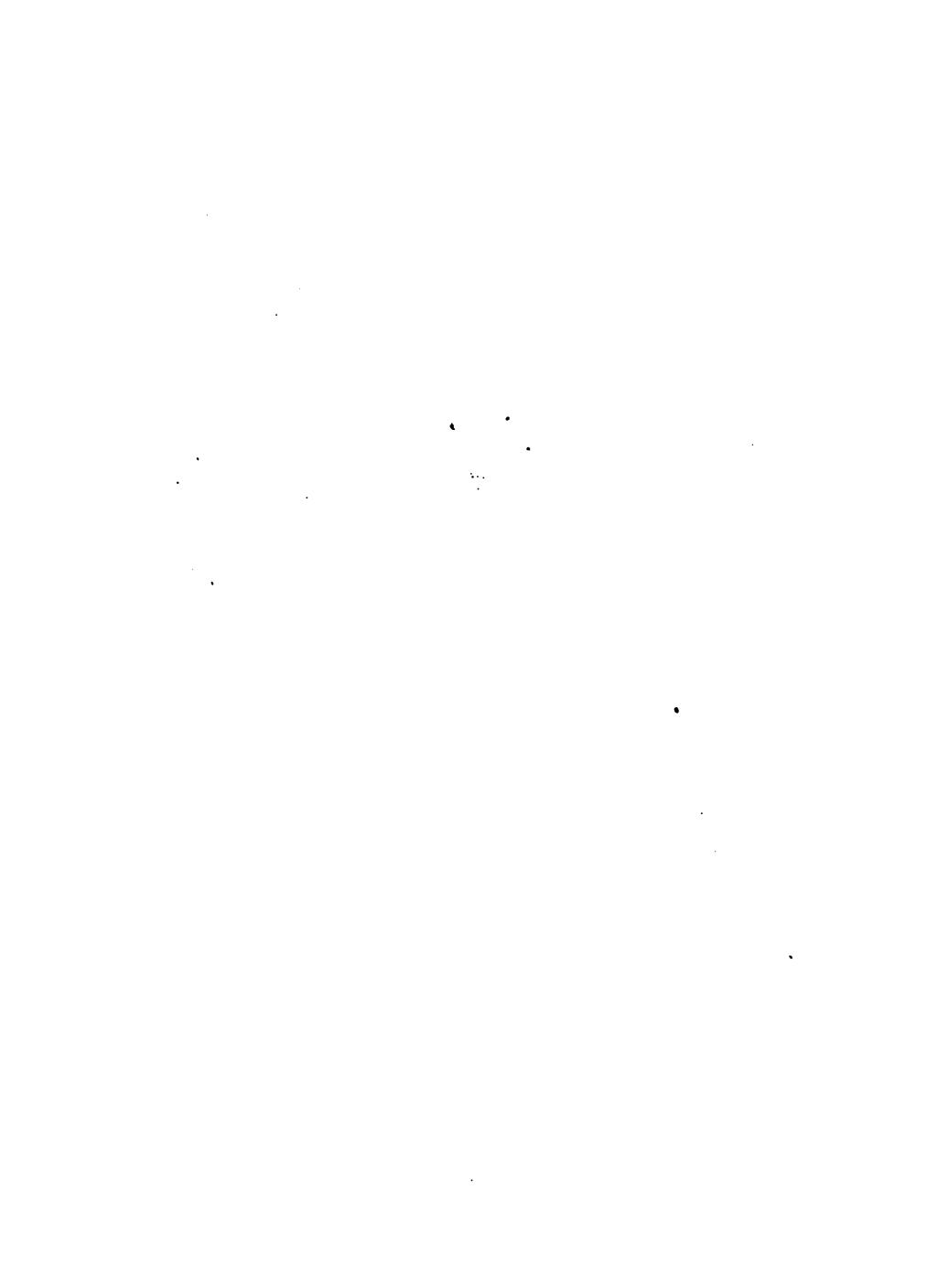
 OW, in the name of goodness, comes all this, or for that matter a single word of it, to have anything to do with those half-pence which at the first you professed to consider?" may be asked by some one who can so long remember so small a coin.

How indeed, I reply ; except that, if you throw one of them into the air, this whole world of ours, and all thereon, will move to meet it, unless some one happens to be playing chuck farthing at the Antipodes.

Such is the power of money !



CHISWICK PRESS:—C. WHITTINGHAM, TOOKS COURT,
CHANCERY LANE.



KD 315 .D36 1879
Meditations in the tea room.
Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 034 241 377

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004**

